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February 12, 2010

Senator Nelson
720 Hart Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Nelson,

Northeast Community College (NECC) is seeking to establish a two-year degree in Wind Energy Technology and enhance training in related programs by developing a “green component” for the curriculum. NECC is committed to being a leader in Nebraska in renewable energy education. Wind power development creates economic opportunity across the country and across sectors. Wind projects generate local construction and wind technician jobs, increase landowner and farmer incomes, and revitalize the rural communities in which they are located.

The United States became the largest generator of wind power in the world, producing enough electricity to power more than 5 million homes in 2008 (Wind Energy for a New Era). In 2008, wind installations increased by an even larger rate (50% with 8,545 MW added) than they did in 2007 (45% with 5,249 MW added), bumping up wind power’s five-year average annual growth rate (2004-2008) to 32%. The new wind projects installed in 2008 represent an investment of \$17 billion – the largest capital investment in the U.S. electricity sector that year.

The 9,922 MW generated by newly installed wind towers in 2009 expanded the national wind plant fleet by 39% and brought the total wind power generating capacity to over 35,000 MW. The five-year average annual growth rate for the industry is now 39%, up from 32% between 2003 and 2008. U.S. wind projects today generate enough to power the equivalent of 9.7 million homes, protecting consumers from fuel price volatility and strengthening our energy security (American Wind Energy Association). The American Wind Energy Association (AWEA) currently ranks Nebraska sixth nationally for energy potential. The AWEA estimates the potential capacity in Nebraska at 99,100 MW.

Thank you for your support on this very important project; together we can provide the education and training needed to produce the workers needed in these emerging careers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dr. Bill R. Path".

Dr. Bill R. Path
President